Confidential

3

16093

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED
1998

Soviet Union-Eastern Europe

STAFF NOTES

Confidential

187

NO. 0447/76
October 2, 1976

SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

CONTENTS

October 2, 1976

USSR-China: New Conciliatory Gestures. 1

USSR-Uganda: A New Arms Agreement? 3

Soviet Comment on US Election Campaign, September 18-October 1. 5

USSR-China: New Conciliatory Gestures

China's rejection of the Soviet party's message of condolences last month has not deterred the USSR from continuing to take a conciliatory approach toward Peking. Yesterday Moscow used the occasion of China's national day to send two additional signals to the Chinese leadership:

--The Soviet government's message of greetings to China emphasized that the "normalization" of their relations would serve those "interested in the building of socialism and communism."

--An article in *Pravda* stressed that the USSR is "prepared to normalize relations."

Soviet greetings to the Chinese on their anniversary have become a traditional event, but the reference to serving the interests of those building socialism and communism is somewhat warmer than usual. Similarly, the article in *Pravda* does not harp on Sino-Soviet differences, but instead points out that there are "no problems" that cannot be solved given the "mutual desire to...take into account each other's interest."

These signals are in line with previous Soviet moves. In addition to the condolence note--the first public message from the Soviet party in ten years--the USSR has tailored its media treatment of China to appeal to those Chinese leaders who may favor some normalization in state relations. During his speech in the UN on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Gromyko also pointed to Moscow's readiness to "normalize" relations.

The USSR thus continues to build a case that it is working for improved relations, while the

October 2, 1976

Chinese continue to be intractable. The gestures may also reflect a desire by General Secretary Brezhnev not to leave himself open to the charge made against Nikita Khrushchev in the early 1960s of pursuing an unnecessarily militant policy toward China. (C[redacted]L)

October 2, 1976

USSR-Uganda: A New Arms Agreement?

The USSR has evidently signed a new arms agreement with Uganda which may provide for the replacement of the MIG-21 fighters destroyed during the Israeli commando raid on Entebbe Airport in early July.

According to Western and Ugandan press sources, a Soviet delegation headed by General Nikolayev signed an arms agreement in Kampala on September 28. No details are available, but Ugandan President Amin hailed the agreement as "effective and timely."

Amin has made no secret of his desire to obtain replacement aircraft from the USSR, which provided Uganda's first MIG-21 fighters in 1974. Following one of several meetings between Amin and the Soviet charge in Kampala after the Entebbe episode, the Ugandan media reported that matters of mutual interest were discussed, "especially re-equipping and reinforcing the power of the Ugandan Armed Forces." Present at the final meeting of the Soviet delegation with Amin were the Ugandan defense minister and several members of the Ugandan air force fighter squadron. [redacted]

Soviet Comment on US Election Campaign, September 18-October 1

CPSU General Secretary Brezhnev's first publicly reported remarks on the US election campaign were contained in Soviet accounts of his meeting with Averell Harriman in Moscow on September 20. A Tass dispatch carried in *Pravda* on the 22nd quoted the former US Ambassador to Moscow as reporting that Brezhnev was "fully informed" about the campaign and that he was unhappy about anti-Soviet and antidetente statements by the candidates. Brezhnev added, however, according to the Tass report, that he was "prepared to cooperate in the further improvement of US-Soviet relations" with whichever candidate wins in November. The closest Brezhnev had previously come to a direct comment on the campaign was a complaint in his June 29 speech in East Berlin that some "figures in prominent positions" in the West were "grossly distorting" Soviet policy.

Brezhnev's attitude of disapproval mixed with realism has been typical of Soviet reporting and commentary on the campaigning by President Ford and Governor Carter since the nominating conventions. Soviet media have been careful to take an evenhanded approach to the two candidates, with Soviet observers claiming to see "no fundamental difference" between them. Both candidates have been assessed as supporting a further improvement in US-Soviet relations and greater restrictions on strategic arms--and both have been criticized for inconsistency in their statements on foreign and defense policy. In recent days, for instance, Soviet commentaries have criticized both candidates for supporting a "high level of military spending" and for publishing messages of "concern" over the position of Soviet Jews.

Soviet media have portrayed the presidential contest as increasingly close. Noting that President Ford was continuing to cut into the sizable lead in public opinion polls which Carter had earlier

enjoyed, a Moscow domestic radio panel discussion of the campaign on September 26 concluded that an "acute struggle is in the offing."

Soviet media took a generally skeptical attitude toward the televised debate between the two candidates on the 23rd. Tass said the debate was designed to stir up interest among a generally apathetic electorate but that it made "no great impression." *Pravda* on the 25th quoted Walter Cronkite as observing that the head-to-head contest elicited "no new questions, no new solutions." (CONFIDENTIAL)